

Nebraska Traffic Safety Facts

Motorcycle Helmets (2005)

CRASH OUTCOME DATA EVALUATION SYSTEM (CODES)



Nebraska Health and Human Services System

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), motorcycle helmets provide the best protection from head injury for motorcyclists involved in traffic crashes. Head injury is a leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes. An unhelmeted motorcyclist is 40 percent more likely to suffer a fatal head injury and 15 percent more likely to suffer a nonfatal injury than a helmeted motorcyclist when involved in a crash.

NHTSA also states “unhelmeted motorcycle riders cost more to treat at the hospital, spend a longer time in rehabilitation, and are more likely to require some form of public assistance to pay medical bills and rehabilitation. Moreover, an unhelmeted motorcyclist is more likely to be an uninsured

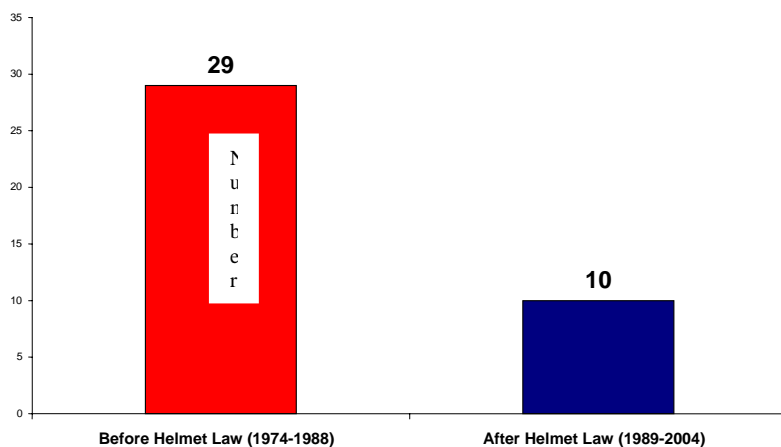
rider. Taxpayers could be picking up a large portion of the medical costs for unhelmeted victims.”

Data from the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety indicates that helmet use reduces fatalities. While approximately 29 motorcycle riders were killed each year during 1974 to 1988, before Nebraska’s helmet law went into effect, only ten motorcycle crash deaths per year occurred during 1989 to 2004 (after the helmet law became effective in 1989).

Nebraska and 18 other states, along with the District of Columbia, have laws requiring helmet use for all motorcycle operators and passengers. The observed helmet use rate in Nebraska is nearly 100 percent. In 2004, Nebraska motorcycle operators, age 20 and under, accounted for 1.6% of all motorcycle operators.

NHTSA has also reported that motorcycle deaths and injuries increased in Texas and Arkansas following helmet law repeal.

Motorcycle Crash Deaths Before and After Nebraska Helmet Law,
1974-2004 (Death/per Year)



Source: Nebraska Health and Human Services System, CODES program